

## Casinos Battle State Lotteries In Internet Poker Lobbying Blitz

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[Tony Batt, GamblingCompliance](#) [1]

The chief lobbying group in Washington, D.C. for casinos launched a campaign Monday urging Congress to authorize federal regulation of Internet poker before the lame duck session ends this year.

The American Gaming Association announced its lobbying blitz as state lottery directors also arrive this week in the nation's capital for an unprecedented effort against federal regulation of online poker.

"I suspect significant lobbying efforts on both sides of [the Internet poker] bill will gear up during the lame duck session," Brian Gallini, a law professor at the University of Arkansas, told GamblingCompliance.

"What's less clear to me is whether anything will actually come of those efforts," Gallini said.

Citing [an opinion released by the U.S. Department of Justice](#) [2] two days before Christmas last year, the American Gaming Association issued a news release saying states are moving "quickly to advance various forms of online gambling."

Although it does not dispute the right of states to license and regulate online poker, the AGA said federal minimum standards are necessary to protect consumers.

"Without swift congressional action, the U.S. will see the largest expansion of legal gambling in its history," Frank Fahrenkopf, the AGA's president and chief executive, said in the news release.

The AGA acknowledged it has seen a bill drafted by Democratic Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada and Republican Senate Minority Whip Jon Kyl of Arizona, which includes a framework for the federal regulation of Internet poker.

The association said it does not know if a widely-circulated draft is the final version of a bill. Nevertheless, the AGA "supports the general provisions" of the Reid-Kyl bill, according to its news release.

The AGA lobbying campaign includes a [Youtube video](#) [3] of more than two minutes entitled, "Stop the Clock." The video asks Congress to turn back the clock and rein in state-by-state expansion of Internet poker.

Unlike the last lame duck session of Congress in 2010 when Reid drafted but did not formally introduce an Internet poker bill and negotiations were confined behind closed doors, the lobbying battle lines this year have been clearly [drawn in advance](#) [4] between the AGA and state lotteries.

Lottery directors from Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri, New Hampshire and Washington State are scheduled this week to lobby Congress in opposition to the Reid-Kyl bill's restrictions against the expansion of online games offered by state lotteries.

"It struck me as relatively foreseeable that nothing legislatively would happen [on Internet poker] in the lead-up to the election," Gallini said.

"Now that we're past that, I think the issue is ripe."



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